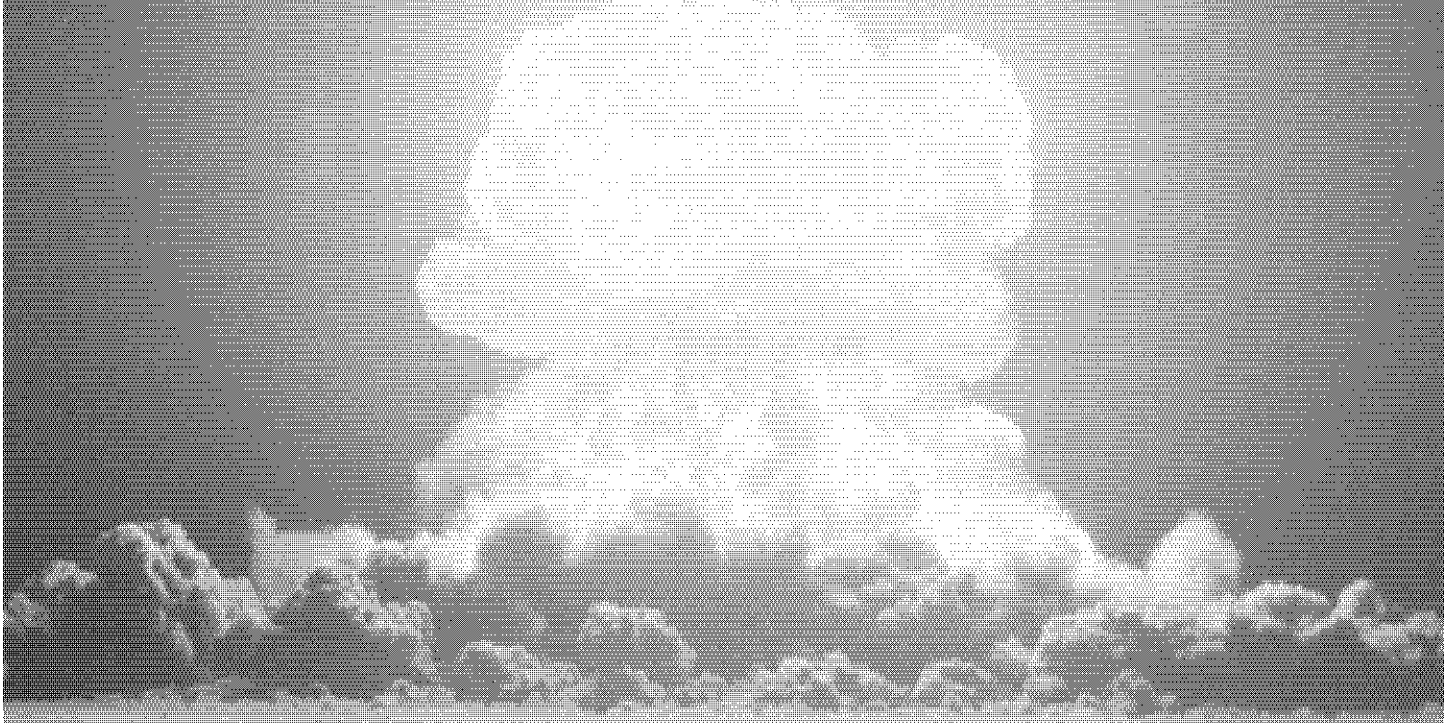


SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



"...there are folks that are in the field that call themselves ufologists, call themselves researchers, investigative journalists...but when their modus operandi is to perpetuate the mystery instead of solving it, we have a big issue. We have a big problem because the mystery will never get resolved as long as these people are out there hawking their latest theories...if you're simply interested in making the rounds of the UFO talk circuit... you're part of the problem, not part of the solution." — James Carrion former international director of MUFON

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Boring UFOlogy

Front cover: There is a common perception amongst UFOlogists that the use of nuclear weapons attract UFOs. I examine this claim in this issue.

Left: Gilles Fernandez and I met in Paris recently and discussed UFOs and UFOlogy. We failed to notice the companion who seemed interested in what we had to say.

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I returned from a long vacation to discover that the infamous Roswell slides have yet to make their appearance. It seems that we may never see these slides, which makes one wonder about how compelling they really are. So, we all have to wait until the Roswell team, and the slide's owner, finds a "benefactor" that will pay them the money they want.

Kevin Randle sent me an e-mail and complained about my critique of his comments on the episode of "Close Encounters" discussing the "Oscar flight" event. Mr. Randle stated he did mention that this was all based on the testimony of Robert Salas in his interview, which is my biggest argument about the Oscar Flight UFO case. Not surprisingly, his comments were left out in the production. It really does not matter that Randle noted this problem or not. The complaint I had was his, and the producer's of the program, presentation of the case as if it were a proven fact, which it is not. There are plenty of reasons to question Salas' version of events and to go on a program and promote the case indicates Randle finds his story compelling. Until the promoters of this case provide evidence that it actually occurred, the distinct possibility exists that it is nothing more than a figment of Salas' imagination.

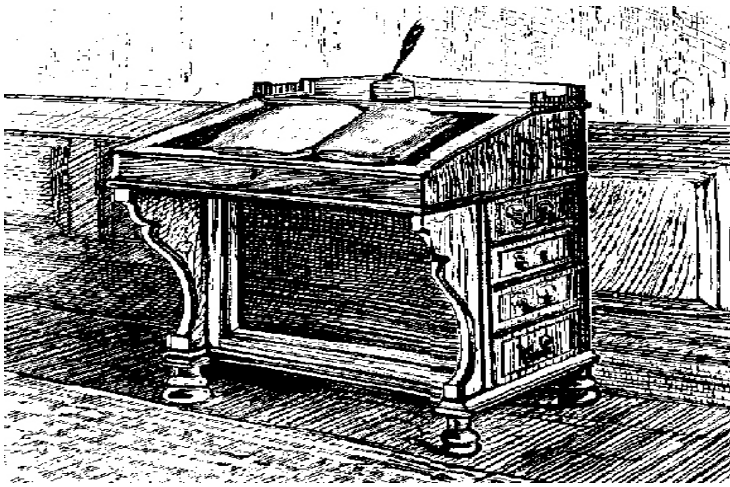
The annual migration to various UFO conferences also occurred this summer. MUFON chose to perform their latest "symposium" in Cherry Hill, New Jersey with the focus being on UFO and the media. In other words, how can UFOlogists get the media to tell their version of what they think UFOs are? This resulted in the usual dog and pony show of various individuals talking about how the media does not give UFOs a fair hearing. All one has to do is watch MUFON's "Hanger one" and do a bit of research to demonstrate that this is exactly why the media does not take the subject seriously. To top it off, MUFON chose to give Steve Bassett the "excellence in UFOlogy" award. This is apparently due to his organization of the infamous "\$600,000 flying saucer fizzle", where nothing was accomplished other than getting attention from the news media for a few days. Like "Hanger one", it was full of UFO "celebrities" getting paid to promote all kinds of wild tales in front of the camera with not a single person questioning what they presented! I recapped this all in SUNlite 5-4 if the reader is interested in refreshing their memories on the affair. UFOlogists are their own worst enemy when it comes to media attention.

While I was in Paris, I managed to drop by for evening of conspiring with fellow UFO skeptic Gilles Fernandez. Much was discussed and we seemed to agree that UFOlogical debates have become boring and a waste of time as the same points keep getting rehashed over and over again with no resolution. I have noticed over the years that UFOlogy itself has become rather boring and predictable. The only effort being expended appears to be towards UFO conferences/festivals and television/radio/internet programs. The science of UFOlogy (if we can call it that) is dead and nothing new is really being done.

I apologize for the minimal content in this issue but my trip to Europe occupied a great deal of my time these last two months.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



The Economist took a rather interesting look at "UFO day", which was celebrated on July 2nd. They analyzed the data from NUFORC and produced some "interesting" results. Little did I realize that Vermont was one of the states that the greatest number of sightings per population. However, I think their conclusion that UFOs tend to be most seen during drinking hours was a bit "over the top". It is a bad conclusion and the more likely reason people file UFO reports between 6 and 11PM is because they are often produced by astronomical objects.

Meanwhile, Boston.com noted that the statistics reveal that New England should be declared a "UFO hot spot" because Maine, NH, Vermont seem to have some of the highest number of sightings per capita in the country. I guess I must have missed all these UFOs in NH.

CEFAA is back at it again with some still images of a UFO

from Chile. Of course, Leslie Kean has started promoting them. The last time she did this with CEFAA she got burned by a bunch of bug videos. In her article, and the report by CEFAA, they describe two images analyzed by CEFAA that were taken in April of 2013 by anonymous individuals. According to the witnesses, the UFO was 5-10 meters in diameter and 600 meters in altitude. CEFAA (and Kean) seems to have simply accepted this estimate with little or no analysis. Kean adds that it was visible for 1 to 2 hours but ONLY two photographs were taken. Something seems odd about that. I am willing to accept the possibility that this is an image of some kind of object but estimates of size and altitude based on the anonymous testimony of a few witnesses, who can not even recall the date, sets off alarm bells. CEFAA is making a lot of assumptions here and, at first glance, their analysis does not really look that convincing.

I was curious what others thought and decided to go to the Above Top Secret (ATS) forum, which had led the charge in analyzing and exposing the El Bosque videos. CEFAA and Kean quietly swept that "evidence" under the rug once it became apparent they were nothing more than bugs. The group did some quick work of the imagery and found a video of the images on Youtube. However, instead of the two images mentioned by CEFAA, there appears to be five different images (one of which may be a cropped version of another image). While the author of the video rapidly scrolled through the EXIF data from the images, one can still see they were taken (according to the camera's clock) on the 15th of August, 2010. The story is that they were taken in April 2013 (no specific date). It is possible that the date on the camera may have been set incorrectly, which is not unusual but what is more strange is what the EXIF data says about the time they were taken and when they were "digitized". All the images were taken between 2:52:13 (two of the images have the same exact time listed) and 2:55:13. However, when they were digitized varies between 2:54:28 and 7:10:54. The clock indicates the photographs were also taken over a period of just a few minutes but the digitization seems to indicate they were manipulated. The only two images that indicate being digitized and taken at the same time were the wide field images. I agree with the ATS posters that the images could possibly be a reflection of the sun off an object in the car that showed up in the window the photographer might have shot through. One wonders if the CEFAA experts considered this possibility.

Leslie Kean then attempted to give the big spin on a recent meeting CEFAA had with the various heads of Chile's civilian aviation organization. Chile's group concluded that UFOs do not pose a threat. Isn't this what all other countries concluded after spending money on collecting and analyzing UFO reports? Additionally, if UFOs pose no threat, why is the Chilean government spending money on CEFAA when it could spend such money on more important things for the people of Chile? UFOlogists were quick to point out that this panel recognized that UFOs "exist". These same UFOlogists ignore that the only thing that "exists" are the REPORTS of UFOs and that the "U" stands for "unidentified". Not one UFO report ever made has been proven, without a doubt, to be something manufactured by an intelligence "not of this earth". I predict that within five years, CEFAA will no longer exist as a government organization.

As per usual, Leslie Kean is just not very well informed about skeptical arguments concerning UFO cases. In this video she promotes the testimony of Fife Symington, which is not in agreement with known facts and may have been something Symington made up on his own (See SUNlite 5-3). Kean also states that skeptics claim that the UFO seen that night was caused by flares. Had she simply read my web site or SUNlite 2-3, she would be informed about the skeptical arguments. Informed skeptics state that the flares only explain the 10 PM videos and not the 8PM event. Kean then allowed General De Brouwer to make a gross error by stating that flares only last for 5-10 seconds and can not explain the 10 PM videos. De Brouwer did not even mention the fact that the pilots who dropped the illumination flares, which last 5-10 MINUTES, confirmed they were the source of the flares! Ignoring De Brouwer's UFOlogical faux pas, Kean then decided to promote the idea that the Belgian air force responded to alien triangles invading their country and the USAF did not. The Belgian AF only responded on a few occasions and never responded in a manner

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

that identified any unknown objects despite witnesses claiming the objects they saw were massive triangles! The lack of anybody questioning these claims demonstrates that the conference they were speaking at was full of people blindly accepting what these two individuals had to say.

Gilles Fernandez pointed me towards an excellent video addressing the 1561 woodcut, which supposedly portrays a space battle between UFOs. This video provides information you won't find on a UFO web site and also gives some possible explanations for what the woodcut might be trying to portray.

Chip Taylor would be a good candidate for a MUFON star team member. He did a superb job investigating his own UFO sighting complete with photograph. However, unlike MUFON, he really did "close the case" on this. It is a shame that MUFON is incapable of announcing which cases they solve. Instead, the only cases they announce are closed, are the ones they can not solve.

Ryan Mullahy exposed, what some have considered, the oldest known UFO photograph for being something other than an alien spaceship. People thought it was a UFO against the clouds but, instead, it is some sort of stick or measuring device sitting on a pile of snow on top of Mount Washington in NH. It was excellent detective work and debunked an internet UFO myth that has been circulating for some time. Kudos to Mr. Mullahy.

Robert Sheaffer had an interesting piece of the JAL1628 UFO case. Some of the information he presents gives one a different point of view regarding the case. More interesting is the MUFON file that contains just about everything you wanted to know about the case including the FAA report that was published but not often seen. I encourage readers to review the entire file and not just the stories that circulate on the internet.

Tony Bragalia posted a missive about Dewey Fournet and his personal UFO study. According to Bragalia, Fournet was being directed to do this study in a manner that government officials could deny. Of course, this was all planned prior to the Freedom of Information act, which means those directing Fournet were looking into the future when they planned all of this. I think Bragalia really does not comprehend how it would have been possible that Fournet could easily have accumulated these files as they came to Blue Book and still fulfill his responsibilities for Blue Book/Grudge. Based on my personal experience, the military, like most civilian offices, have people doing all sorts of things that may or may not be related to their job. As long as the job they are assigned to is accomplished, their superiors tend to look the other way when it comes to any additional activities their personnel are doing.

On page 110 of my copy of NICAP's UFO evidence, there is a May 4, 1958 letter by Fournet to NICAP. He makes the statement that he performed a study of "*specific aspects of UFO data*" and that he completed it prior to his departure from Washington D.C. around the same time he made a presentation to the Robertson Panel. Fournet met with the panel for about two hours and made his case. Missing from Bragalia's piece are the comments made by the Robertson Panel about Fournet's opinion based on this analysis of all these UFO cases he examined during this "study":

Mr. {Fournet}, in his presentation, showed how he had eliminated each of the known and probable causes of sightings leaving him "extra-terrestrial" as the only one remaining in many cases. {Fournet}'s background as an aeronautical engineer and technical intelligence officer (Project Officer, BLUEBOOK for 15 months) could not be slighted. However, the Panel could not accept any of the cases cited by him because they were raw, unevaluated reports. Terrestrial explanations of the sightings were suggested in some cases and in others the time of sighting was so short as to cause suspicion of visual impressions.

While Fournet was able to draw his own conclusions about UFO reports, he seemed unable to convince those outside of the UFO-logical circle that those conclusions had merit. It is also important to note that Fournet stated this "study" was apparently something he prepared on his own in order to use as an argument against, what he referred to as, "*apathy and/or bias on the subject which prevailed in certain official quarters*". There is no indication in that letter that Fournet was operating under the direction of some higher authority, which he would have mentioned.

Ted Molczan exposed another case as something associated with space debris. The case involved people recovering spheres that fell out of the sky. Ryan Wood would later speculate that this was a case of project Moondust recovering alien spacecraft debris. Project Moondust was busy collecting debris from space but it was man-made. Ted points out the spheres were part of a Delta 2 rocket second stage that had been used to place the satellite Westar 3 into orbit. This is another case of UFOlogy trying to create a mystery out of something that was not so mysterious.

Former MUFON international director James Carrion appeared on the Paracast and made quite a few comments that are worth noting. Jack Brewer of the UFO trail summarized them nicely but it might be best to listen to the entire podcast.

Adding to Carrion's commentary were the comments made by Don Berliner that appeared on Billy Cox's blog. Considering Billy Cox's misrepresentation and sensationalizing of various UFO cases, I am shocked he allowed it to appear. Then again, Berliner is one of the co-authors of "Crash at Corona", which violated some of the items he mentioned in this piece. In that book, he allowed himself to be tricked by Gerald Anderson's "sincerity" and he also endorsed the fraudulent MJ-12 documents. One hopes that Berliner has learned his lessons. I have my doubts about Billy Cox doing the same. He seems perfectly willing to promote the testimonies of "sincere" witnesses without even questioning their stories.

Jason Covalito seems to have more time than I do for watching UFO shows. His review of Giorgio Tsoukalos's "In search of ancient aliens" pretty much confirms what I already knew about the show watching the trailers. It is more of the sensationalist kind of nonsense being peddled on television. It offers nothing but a platform to peddle some of the worst ideas in UFOlogy.

Billy Cox reports that Hanger one has been renewed for another season. According to his blog, Harzan wants to continue the program's sensationalist style of programming because it brings in new members to MUFON and he wants to increase the number of members to 50,000! What is the quality of individuals that will join MUFON because of Hanger one? Will they be the same style of conspiracy cultists that populate the program? How will that improve the quality of UFO research? How does Harzan think his organization will be perceived by those outside the UFO world? With all this new money coming in, will MUFON use it to fund new avenues of research or will it be used to pay the same old speakers and organizers for MUFON conferences? I am confident that, if MUFON continues on its current path, they will be perceived as a bunch of loons/nutters/conspiracy fanatics and they will never solve the UFO problem. One can suggest they do not desire any outcome other than promoting a mystery. By doing so, they can continue to become famous and collect funds from gullible people, who want to believe.

Cox also complained that NASA won't say anything about another blurry speck that UFO proponents saw appear on video from the ISS. I think it is safe to say that what appeared on the video can be explained by space debris or some other known phenomena. My guess is this will probably be one of the prize cases presented in the next episode of "Hanger one"!

Scott Brando posted some interesting satire on his UFO of interest blog. It shows two UFOlogists (who I do not recognize but I am sure are quite prominent in Europe) stating, "Here's Our formidable investigative tools that allow us to disclose the ET presence on planet earth". The tools involve using what appears to be correction tape, delete keys, erasers, and white out. Is Scott suggesting that these UFOlogists are altering/forging documents?

Mr. Brando also pointed out that a recent photograph taken by the Mars Rover "Curiosity" was definitely the moon Phobos. UFO author Scott Waring seemed to think it was a cigar shaped UFO. Scott Brando's piece definitively identifies the object, which makes one wonder why Waring could not have done the same kind of work. I guess it is easier to promote a mystery than attempt to solve it. Some UFOlogists are just too lazy to look beyond what they want to believe.

This video pretty much explains the famous Washington DC flap photograph showing UFOs over the capital building. This has been debunked sometime ago but I applaud the effort here as it readily explains the UFOs as lens flares.

Not that it bears repeating, but this article about the Petit-Rechain photograph needs to be read (feel free to have it translated). For years, this photograph was considered some of the best evidence for alien visitation until the photographer stepped forward and said it was all a fake. This prompted the typical UFOlogical response that, even if the photograph was a hoax, the rest of the cases from the Belgian UFO wave are solid as a rock. It is easy to say this but many of these same investigators, who endorsed the photograph, also endorsed these other cases. Were their investigations of those cases just as inadequate?

The Roswell Corner

Slip-sliding away

I was disappointed that the Roswell festival did not feature the release of the much talked out alien body slides the Roswell research team had been hinting about for some time. Rich Reynolds' July 10 posting about how the slides might have run into legal issues, gave us more information from the commenter by the name of "Larry", who claims to have seen the slides. Larry would then post his description on the UFO chronicles blog.

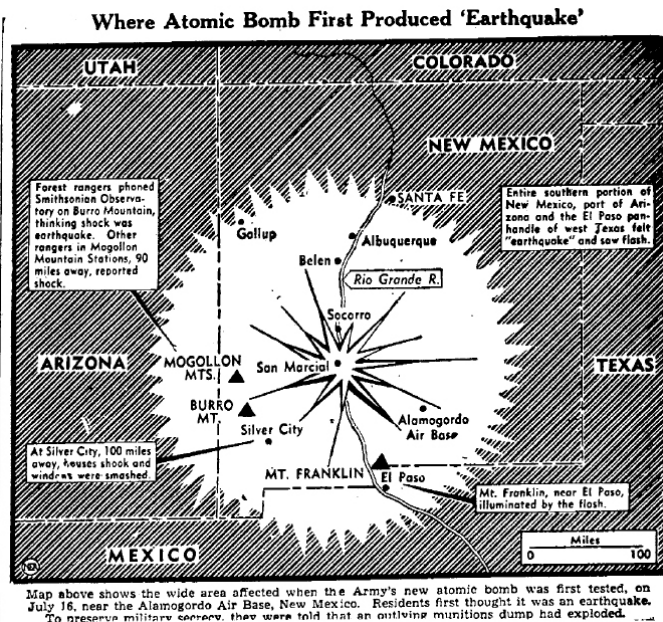
I had originally suggested it might be an aircraft crash victim but this description, if the height mentioned by "Larry" is correct, appears to rule this out. The photographs seem to have been taken under low light conditions and the focus was apparently soft. "Larry" also added that there was no connection visible that stated there was any association with Roswell. It does not sound impressive and there can be a great many things this could be. If the placard (which was apparently describing what the body was) is any indication, it was on display for various people and not just the photographer. Is it possible that this was a public display for a museum, or freak show? If it is a "freak show" display, it could have been some sort of wax figure depicting some "freak of nature". Perhaps the placard reads, "Half-boy, half-monkey - the missing link". It would be appropriate that the "Roswell research team" would fall for this kind of thing.

As usual, Anthony Bragalia seems confident it has something to do with the Roswell crash. He would respond in a blog posting with the title, "Roswell, the slides and the truth". Despite his proclamations in this piece, he only provides his word as evidence. I really have trouble with that based on his track record as I have demonstrated so many times in past issues of SUNlite. If the evidence that *"The slides depict something that is bi-pedal and not known to Earth"* is as solid as he proclaims, this evidence would have been presented to the public long ago. However, it would probably be scoffed at just like the "alien autopsy" film. The reason that the slides have not been revealed is that the "research team" fears one thing above anything else. They worry that the source of these slides may actually be identified as something other than an alien body. The internet is full of sleuths with access to all sorts of information that can reveal a great deal. If somebody were to identify this "body", it would be an incredible failure on the "team's" part. Therefore, I doubt the slides will ever be presented. UFOlogists always want skeptics/debunkers to "put up or shut up". It is time for Bragalia, his cohorts, and the "owner" of the slides to come clean.

ARE UFOS ATTRACTED BY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS, WEAPONS, OR REACTORS?

Since the dawn of modern UFOlogy, there has been an effort to link the United States nuclear activities to UFO reports. The theory is that any alien species in space would have been alerted to the use of nuclear weapons by the explosions themselves or were monitoring us and became alarmed when we suddenly revealed we had the power of the atom. The aliens then began to monitor our use of nuclear power and weapons. While the theory is interesting, does it really stand up to scrutiny?

Did you see it?



Prior to June 24, 1947, when Kenneth Arnold had his memorable UFO sighting, the United States detonated five nuclear weapons. There was the initial test at Trinity site on July 16, 1945, which was followed by the two atomic bomb drops on Japan in August. The United States then exploded two more bombs in 1946 during Operation Crossroads in the South Pacific. All of these explosions were made using relatively low yield weapons of around 20 kilotons.

Only one of these weapons was exploded in darkness and that was the first test at Trinity. While the Army gave the cover story that an ammunition dump had exploded, the truth was the flash of the explosion was seen from many miles away. Reports appear to indicate that the explosion was seen from as far as 150 miles away near the Arizona border and El Paso.¹ The distances could have been greater but much of the area is somewhat remote and news reports were limited. The explosions over Nagasaki, Japan were reportedly seen from about 250 miles away. All the reports indicate the flash was very bright.

Neutrons, Gamma rays, and other particles

In addition to light and sound, nuclear weapons produce ionizing radiation. The two with the most energy are gamma rays and neutrons. At close proximity, a nuclear explosion generates incredible amounts of radiation. However, as distance increases, the miles of the explosion becomes a point source. At that point, the concentration of these particles/"rays" lose their strength as a function of an inverse square law. This means that if one doubles the distance, the intensity drops by a factor of four.

Other particles released in the explosion are usually too low of an energy to be noticeable at a great distance. However, there is one particle that most people don't consider to be that important. Neutrinos/anti-neutrinos are electrically neutral and will travel great distances through matter with little interaction. Fission and Fusion explosions produce large quantities of such particles. Even though they do not readily interact with matter, the concentration of neutrinos/anti-neutrinos will also fall off with the square of the distance.

The view from space

While a nuclear weapon produces large amounts of energy, light, and seismic events, it is obvious that its detection drops off significantly as one gets farther away. From earth orbit, a nuclear explosion must be quite spectacular. However, would it be so obvious from the moon? I would not be surprised that such an event could be seen from the moon but one would have to look for it. A casual observer on the moon that was not looking at the earth might miss it. What about if one were on the planet Mars? I am sure a telescopic observer might see the flash, if it occurred on the side of the earth that was visible. However, the actual magnitude of the earth would not change significantly for an observer just using the naked eye.

The detection of the energy/particles emitted from a nuclear explosion are just as problematic. Detectors on the planet Mars might register such an event but the detectors would have to be very sensitive and able to differentiate between the background signals being received from the sun and cosmic sources. Even the neutrinos would be difficult to detect amid the background of all the other sources of neutrinos in space. It would be like looking for a specific drop of water in the middle of the ocean. Exactly what point that it would be impossible to detect a nuclear explosion from space is not clear but it seems that one could conclude that it would be highly unlikely that they could be detected outside the confines of the solar system.

Nuclear attraction

Based on this information it seems highly unlikely that the aliens were flitting about the galaxy and were suddenly alerted to the Earth's presence by the explosion of atomic weapons in 1945. They would have been more alerted to our presence by the broadcast of the "war of the worlds" in 1938. The only reasonable argument is that they were interested in us prior to 1947 and, surprised by our sudden acquisition of nuclear power, began a systematic monitoring of earth and its inhabitants.

To serve man

It appears that many UFOlogists have accepted this theory, which may have first been proposed by Donald Keyhoe:

In regard to the flying saucers themselves, I believe that in the majority of cases, space ships are the answer:

1. *The earth has been under periodic observation from another planet, or other planets, for at least two centuries.*
2. *This observation suddenly increased in 1947, following, the series of A-bomb explosions begun in 1945.*
3. *The observation, now intermittent, is part of a long-range survey and will continue indefinitely. No immediate attempt to contact the earth seems evident. There may be some unknown block to making contact, but it is more probable that the spacemen's plans are not complete.²*

Jean-Jacques Velasco echoes this belief:

I am fascinated with the possible correlation between nuclear activity, the location of nuclear weapon storage facilities, and the presence of UFOs. We can see on a graph the relationship between atomic explosions and visual/radar sightings, by looking at the similarity in the two curves. We can't be certain why, but perhaps UFOs are "monitoring" and this activity was heightened during times of dangerous nuclear activity on the planet.³

While Keyhoe and Velasco make no effort to draw any conclusions about why the aliens are monitoring our nuclear activities, others have decided that the UFOs are a source of "divine intervention" to protect us from ourselves. It was a common theme in the contactee movement of the 1950s but has been picked up by UFOlogists in recent years. Richard Dolan implies that UFOs are going to prevent us from doing the unthinkable:

Humanity's future is not supposed to be one in which we are armed to the teeth with nukes that can blow up the entire planet. That can not be our future. Any intelligent observing species seeing us has to know the same thing.⁴

One can not expect to understand how the aliens might think but it appears that Mr. Dolan, and others, feel that the aliens have high moral values and are interested in keeping us from hurting ourselves. Since UFOlogists expect the aliens to behave this way, we must assume that they would logically pursue this course to the point that they could ensure earthlings would not commit the ultimate act of self annihilation. If the aliens were attempting to intercede upon our behalf, they would not threaten military facilities with warlike overtures/incursions, which might incite a nuclear exchange. Instead, they would simply announce their presence to the world in some grand gesture (something like "The day the earth stood still") to move us on the right track of peace and prosperity. This is where the logic in the "divine intervention" theory fails.

To fear man

Other UFOlogists, like Stanton Friedman, promote a different theory. They see us being a threat to the aliens, which is why they are monitoring us:

We're not alone, that there are guys out there more advanced than we are, and that we are a threat to the neighborhood.⁵

This seems to be a backward kind of way at looking at our alien overseers. If they were that concerned about us going into space with our warlike ways and technology, they certainly would not be concerned about the human race destroying itself by nuclear annihilation. They would have simply attempted to influence us into that nuclear exchange and then could rest easy that the earth was no longer a threat.

The other half of Friedman's theory is that we are space faring planet ready to conquer the galaxy. Despite Friedman's claims that spaceflight between the stars is relatively easy, we still have problems getting out of earth orbit. Either Friedman is a genius that nobody is listening to or actual rocket scientists find his spacecraft design impractical. The aliens, if they really exist, appear to agree because they do not interfere with our development of spacecraft.

This brings into question why the aliens might be interested in invading our airspace. By doing this, they might eventually be shot down, which could be disastrous. Instead of keeping earthlings trapped in earth orbit, they may give us the technology for interstellar flight. In order not to risk such an event, it would be far easier to monitor the earth and its technology from a distance. Earthlings have been monitoring each other from earth orbit for decades with little risk. Friedman's logic about why the aliens are monitoring us fails the common sense test.

To watch man

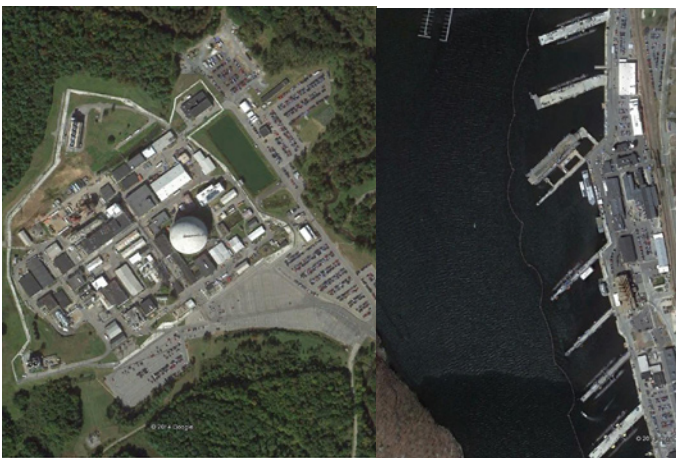
If we dismiss these two theories, then that means the aliens monitoring earth for some other reason. Is it just for the sake of studying us? If that is the case, why even allow themselves to be seen and why would they invade the airspace of these vital facilities? There is no reason for UFOs to interfere with nuclear facilities if they are simply monitoring our progress.

What about those reactors?

In addition to Nuclear weapons, there is a belief that UFOs are also interested in our nuclear reactors. Jan Harzan states:

Currently there are 65 active nuclear power plants in the United States with 104 reactors across 31 states and nearly every one of these plants across the United States has experienced a UFO encounter.⁶

This seems to be a bit of cherry picking by Harzan. Exactly what is defined as a UFO encounter? Is a UFO encounter defined as some nocturnal light reported by a single individual? If that is the case, I bet I can find a significant number of UFO encounters in the area of Yankee Stadium in the Bronx. That does not mean they are interested in watching the Yankees play. The real evidence would be to provide real UFO reports that can be verified to have interfered with nuclear reactor operations.



Harzan also ignores the hundred or so nuclear reactors operated by the US Navy. I was stationed on three submarines (see Google earth image to near left showing Groton, Ct sub base with eight submarines, and their reactors, moored to the piers) and at one land based facility (see Google earth image to far left of the West Milton, NY facility, which had four operating reactors at the time I was stationed there in 1979). I never saw a UFO hover over, interfere with, or suck energy from any operating or shut down reactor. I also worked with a great number of other personnel, who had operated reactors on ships, land facilities, and submarines. None of them have repeated such a story either. I am sure MUFON can find UFO reports over navy bases that they can try and link to nuclear vessels stationed there but that kind of conclusion is one based more on wishful thinking than a careful examination of the evidence.

Despite these implied claims of Harzan, we still must consider the possibility that UFOs are attracted to nuclear reactors. This brings us to ask the question of why UFOs would be so interested in visiting our nuclear reactors? Some UFOlogists have an interesting theory regarding this.

Nuclear attraction 2

Nuclear reactors emit radiation just like nuclear weapons but at reduced levels. The reaction is controlled and the design does not allow for an actual nuclear explosion to occur (contrary to the claims of some UFOlogists). Nuclear reactors can still be dangerous if they are not run properly. It appears that UFOlogists feel that UFOs have an interest in these plants for the same reason they have interests in nuclear weapons.

In the Hanger one episode, UFO hot spots, John Ventre proposed the theory that they were either monitoring our development of nuclear reactors or trying to recharge their systems using the radiation emitted from the reactor. Based on what I have read, these theories appear to represent the general beliefs of many UFOlogists.

The idea that UFOs are monitoring the development of nuclear technology by hovering over nuclear reactors is a questionable one. The concept of how nuclear reactors operate can be found quite easily in textbooks and the internet. Each reactor has its own unique technology but they all operate in similar fashion. The repeated hovering over nuclear reactors will not improve their knowledge about our technology. They would be better off hacking into the network systems where all the information about this technology is stored. If the aliens are as advanced as UFOlogists say they are, nuclear reactors and hacking into networks are child's

play.

The second reason proposed by Ventre was that, somehow, UFOs recharge themselves by hovering over reactors. This implies that UFOs consume energy and need to recharge/refuel. If they are interested in electricity, they can obtain that anywhere and do not have to hover near a reactor. Hovering near a reactor implies that there is some sort of energy being emitted by reactors that can be useful. The only energy that leaks outside a reactor are the gamma rays, neutrons, and neutrinos/anti-neutrinos that make it past the shielding of the reactor containment facility. About the only one of these that might be a source for energy are the neutrinos/anti-neutrinos. Neutrons and gamma rays are shielded such that the levels outside the reactor facility are very small. Neutrinos/anti-neutrinos can not be shielded as they do not readily interact with matter. Are UFOs recharging their fuel cells by using these particles? Why don't they have their own nuclear reactors in space that they can recharge from or simply use the neutrinos coming from the sun? Again, we are left trying to reason how aliens might think. Based on what we know, It seems totally illogical that they would "suck" neutrinos/anti-neutrinos from a reactor in order to fuel their vessels when other sources are more readily available or they could create their own particles for use by building a small reactor on an asteroid far away or inside their own spacecraft.

There seems to be no good reason for UFOs to hover over reactors. The evidence to support the idea that they desire to do so is more a case of selecting evidence to fit the theory and ignoring evidence that negates it.

Nuclear statistics

In the Summer 2002 edition of the International UFO Reporter, Donald Johnson tried to make the case that UFOs do appear near nuclear facilities more than they appear in other locations. At first glance, it appears that he had made a strong case using statistics.

Johnson began by selecting counties that include nuclear facilities and then selecting counties, with similar populations, that did not contain nuclear facilities. He then took the UFOCAT database to compare the number of UFOs seen in each group. Close examination of this methodology demonstrates that there may be flaws that skewed the results.

The first flaw appears to be the data itself. He used UFOCAT as his source of data. UFOCAT is a database compiled by the Center of UFO studies and contains thousands of UFO reports that date back to 1947 and before. The problem with the data is that the degree of investigation for these cases varies. Some of them appear to be just UFO reports that never were investigated at all! Other cases in the database, according to Allan Hendry, have explanations offered for them. If there are IFOs in this database, it tends to invalidate the analysis. In 1980, Hendry felt that UFOCAT was a great tool for reference but a poor tool for statistical analysis:

UFOCAT cannot generally be used as a statistical tool, then, since it violates the three precepts set out at the beginning of this chapter (random sampling, validity of the individual entries, uniformity of data being compared).⁷

Another of Hendry's problems with UFOCAT was that some of the sources found in the database are from newspaper clippings, UFO Periodicals, and books written by UFO authors with questionable source material. Johnson seems to be perfectly willing to accept these reports with little or no skepticism. In his article, he chose to provide us with a sample of what he considered to be a compelling UFO report:

On April 26, 1986, during the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster, technicians reported that they observed a fiery sphere, similar in color to brass, within 1,000 feet of the damaged Unit 4 reactor at the height of the fire, about three hours after the initial explosion. Two bright red rays shot out from the UFO and were directed at the reactor. It hovered in the area for about three minutes, then the rays vanished and the UFO moved slowly away to the northwest. Radiation levels taken just before the UFO appeared read 3,000 milliroentgens/hour, and after the rays the readings showed 800 milliroentgens/hour. Apparently the UFO had brought down the radiation level!⁸

His source for this report is a book written about "Soviet UFOs" with no verification. It appears to be the same story as told on Rense.com, which completely ignores all sorts of facts about nuclear power plants and what actually occurred that night. Three hours after the initial explosion, the firefighters were still combating fires at the building. They received no assistance from this UFO and nobody reported seeing it in 1986. Additionally, the radiation levels quoted are not supported by any data. It is known that the radiation detectors at the plant were not designed to detect such high levels! The only ones capable of doing so, were damaged in the explosion. When radiation levels were measured, the values measured were not in milliroentgens an hour but thousands of roentgens per hour!⁹ Johnson's source is nothing more than rumor and gossip reported years after the event. If this is the kind of case files he is using for his database, then any statistical analysis using such data, is worthless.

I also disagreed with Johnson's decision to remove any US counties with military bases that "might have held nuclear weapons at one time"¹⁰ from his control group. The reduction of the number of military bases in the control group is going to skew the results because there is going to be less military airborne activity in these counties. One must assume that a great number of these UFO reports are probably IFOs, as suggested by Allan Hendry. Therefore, the reduction of military air bases in the control group is going

to reduce the number of military aircraft flying over that county, which means that fewer UFO reports will be filed. The end result will be that there will probably be less UFO reports in the non-nuclear category.

Another flaw in this study appears to be the categorizing of UFO reports by county. How can we be certain that a UFO was actually located in a specific county? Just because an observer is in one county does not mean the UFO seen was in the same county. It could have been in a nearby county. This is going to produce inaccuracies in the statistics.

While Johnson's work is promoted by some as proof that UFOs are attracted by anything nuclear, the study has flaws that skew the results. As a result, the conclusions drawn from this analysis are baseless.

The Nuclear facility and UFO myth?

There is no question that there are UFO sightings around atomic energy plants/facilities found in various government files. This may have a lot to do with that they are constantly guarded twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Since IFOs generate UFO reports at the same general rate amongst various observers ¹¹, then one would expect that they should have more UFO reports than your local shopping mall. As always, it is important to point out that the "U" in UFO means "Unidentified" and not "alien".

There is also no doubt that there is a concern expressed by government agencies about such reports and the information is passed on through appropriate channels. Considering the nature of these facilities, to not report this information to superiors, would be negligent. It is up to the authorities to determine if these UFO reports are a threat. To date, there is no documentation that demonstrates that any governmental organization considers UFOs a serious threat to the security of any nuclear facility.

Reports of weapons or reactor anomalies when UFOs are reportedly seen are usually nothing more than rumor. That makes the UFO-Nuclear connection tenuous at best and a myth at worst. Until better evidence is presented, the theory that UFOs are attracted by nuclear facilities is unproven.

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A listing of Astronomer UFO reports

Rich Reynolds recently posted a link of astronomers, who have made UFO reports. The listing was compiled by Philip Wylie and is composed of about 400 individual sightings between 1623 and 2000. While this sounds impressive, a little digging reveals that it is like many UFO lists. Not only are many of the sightings probably IFOs, the older cases are misrepresentations of what was actually reported.

What about those sources

The sources used for these sightings are various UFO groups, lists, and books. The question is, "How accurate are they in representing the actual event?" Probably the quickest way to find out is to look at some of the older cases. I started with the first six cases on the list and decided to find additional information that might explain them.

1. *November 17th, 1623: 'A burning globe appeared at sunset - on 17 November 1623. It was visible in different places all over Germany. In Austria, it is affirmed a sound of cracking or crushing came from it, as if from a thunderbolt, which, however, I take to be groundless.'* Johannes Kepler.¹ This sighting sounds a lot like a meteor fireball, which means it probably was documented. I found one source, which states the observations were used by astronomers at the time to determine the altitude of the meteor.² There is no reason to suspect this was an alien spaceship and it can be explained.
2. *March 21st, 1676: The Italian, Geminiano Montanari, was knowledgeable in geophysics, biology, mathematics, ballistics, and meteorology; but his greatest achievements are considered to have been in astronomy. He reported this sighting to Edmund Halley, who commented - 'I find it one of the hardest things to account for, that I have ever yet met!.... 'It appeared one and three quarter hours after sunset, coming over the Adriatic from Dalmatia. It crossed over all Italy, at a height of some 40 miles, and hissed as it passed, over Ronzare. It passed over the sea from Leghorn to Corsica, with a sound like the rattling of a great cart over stones. I compute that it travelled 160 miles a minute. It seemed to be a vast body apparently bigger than the moon!'* (FSOM/DSB)³ Again, this sounds like a bright fireball. A source document describing the March 19, 1718 meteor by William Whiston referenced these reports. Missing from this description is the statement regarding a terminal explosion, which would be what one would expect from a fireball.

*And at Leghorn it was heard to give a very great Blow, beyond the Noise of a great Cannon; with a Rattling, which continued about a Minute or two.*⁴

There seems to be no reason to consider this anything but a bright fireball.

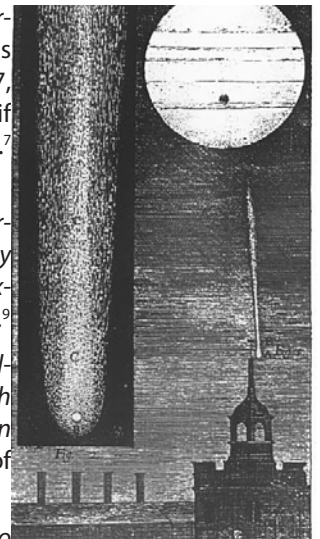
3. *May 1677: '...the famous astronomer, Edmund Halley, Savilian professor of geometry at Oxford University, reported seeing a "great light in the sky all over Southern England, many miles high."*⁵ This sounds impressive but the lack of a date made it difficult to check. It may have been the comet of 1677, which was visible from April to May (see Robert Hooke sketch to the right).⁶ I am not even sure if Halley can be the proper source here because Halley was on the island of Helena in 1677 and 1678.⁷ Perhaps Halley was commenting on the observations made by others.
4. *July 31st, 1708: '...from 9 to 10 p.m., a similar apparition, thought to be 50 miles high, passed over Sheerness, and the 'Buoy at the Nore,' Suffolk, and London. It moved "with incredible speed, and was very bright. It seemed to vanish and left a pale white light behind it. There were no hissing sounds and no explosion."* (FSOM).⁸ Again, this sounds like a bright fireball and William Whiston described it as such.⁹
5. *1715: Unusual phenomena were observed on the Moon, at the time of the solar eclipse, by Edmund Halley and J.E.de Louville - '...as it were a sort of flash or momentary vibrations of beams of light, as though someone were setting fire to gunpowder trails as used in mining. These bright flashes were very brief in duration and appeared now here, now there, but always in the shade.'* (FSR 41-2).¹⁰ This sounds sort of creepy, until you read Halley's actual account.

*During the whole time of the total eclipse, I kept my telescope constantly fixt on the moon, in order to observe what might occur in this uncommon appearance and I found that there were perpetual flashes or corufcations of light, which seemed for a moment to dart out from behind the moon, now here, now there, on all sides; but more especially on the western side a little before emmersion...*¹¹

What Halley is describing appears to be sunlight leaking by mountains and craters on the moon's edge. There is nothing unusual about this.

6. *March 6th, 1716: Halley saw an object illuminating the sky for more than two hours from about 7:00 p.m. onwards: 'A man could easily read print in the light thrown out by these spears from the same body. It did not change for two hours, and then it seemed as if new fuel had been cast on a fire.' / Similar phenomena were reported to Halley by other astronomers of his time, notably by astronomers Gottfried Kirch and Schlazius, at Leipzig, Germany re. an event on July 9th, 1686 and by Montanari an Italian mathematician and astronomer regarding a sighting on March 21st, 1676.*¹² This is another misrepresentation of Halley's observations. On March 6, 1716, there was a great aurora visible all over England, which Halley observed.¹³

It appears that these cases all have reasonable explanations and a further check of the list shows all sorts of observations that can be



explained. Scattered throughout the list predating the twentieth century are:

- Quite a number of Transient Lunar Phenomena observations. Many of these are usually tricks of light and shadow being observed with instruments of less than optimum quality. Others could possibly be meteorite impacts on the moon.
- Planetary observations that are observations of phenomenon that have been since identified.
- There are also observations of “dark objects” transiting the sun. These could be anything that was airborne (birds, airborne debris, insects) or were observations of sunspots. A lot of these observations were made at the time that astronomers thought there was a planet inside the orbit of Mercury (interestingly with the name of Vulcan). If an astronomer saw a small spot in front of the sun they thought was not a sunspot, they reported it.

Referring to these as observations of something “alien” is a bit of a stretch.

Hoaxes

I can't say for sure if any of these cases are hoaxes but I did count nine entries where George Adamski was prominently identified as the observer. Also included are the Zainesville UFO photographs by Ralph Ditter. The inclusion of such entries indicates the author was not very discriminating. Most, if not all, UFOlogists consider the Adamski and Ditter stories to be made up. Maybe Mr. Wylie is an exception.

This brings into question if there are any other unknown hoaxes on the list. One can not say for sure but solitary observations of events always have the potential of being a hoax or figments of the observers imagination.

Modern UFO reports

I often have difficulty accepting reports by people who refer to themselves as amateur astronomers without knowing if they are knowledgeable about the subject or not. Just because somebody owns a telescope or looks at the stars, it does not make them an “amateur astronomer”. I often refer to these people as “sky watchers” because they occasionally look at the sky and see things they do not understand. It is not unusual for inexperienced amateur astronomers to make hasty declarations that they have seen something that was unusual or exciting. The International Astronomical Union states that amateur astronomers often report discoveries of comets too hastily:

For every real new comet discovery, the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams (CBAT) gets perhaps five reports of “discoveries” that do not pan out.¹⁴

Erroneous observations by inexperienced amateur astronomers is nothing new and something that can not be appreciated by UFOlogists. A good example of this can be found in this list:

October 5th, 1997: Cheyenne, Wyoming, USA; 7pm. An amateur astronomer witness, who spends many hours observing the sky, noticed a 'comet' heading north. It looked like it was moving at the speed of a satellite, with the tail fading to nothing - 'I know comets don't move like this.'¹⁵

A quick check of the SeeSat archive reveals that the space shuttle, Atlantis, conducted a water dump near this time as it passed over the western United States. Dan Laszlo apparently saw the same event from Colorado and compared it to Comet Hale-Bopp:

I had the privilege to see this pass from Fort Collins, Colorado, USA 40.5 N, 105 W. STS-86 was trailed by a curving plume, readily visible even at 15 degrees altitude. I first saw it at about 1:54 UT (ed note: this computes to 1954MDT). At maximum altitude the plume could be traced for about 1.5 degrees, and was about 0.3 to 0.5 degree wide to the unaided eye.

The starlike Atlantis with the soft, adjacent plume was amazingly similar to the appearance of Comet Hale-Bopp last March. Truly unearthly!¹⁶

There is a mismatch in time but after looking at the NUFORC entry for this event, it appears that the time listed was just an approximation. Had the individual, who made the UFO report, were an experienced astronomer, they would have done just a bit of research to identify what they saw instead of going to a UFO web site to file a report. Far too often, amateur astronomers allow their personal beliefs/desires to affect their observations. I would not be surprised if a great number of UFO reports on this list were made by the same type of observers.

There are other entries in the modern database that sound a lot like the entries from pre-1947 and involve known phenomena:

- The April 25, 1966 fireball was widely photographed and filmed (see SUNlite 4-3 p.35-36). There is little doubt it was a meteor yet John Keel is quoted as stating it was not a meteor!
- There are two observations of the Cosmos 2238 re-entry on 31 March 1993.
- There are also entries of potential stratospheric balloons (see August 2, 1968 and September 5, 1968 for examples).

Lack of details

The list is full of cases where no date or time is listed. To top it off, some cases are just statements that say an amateur astronomer saw a UFO! We don't know the proficiency level of the astronomer and what they actually saw. Such observations are worth-

less.

Just a list

Like all the other listings of UFO cases, this list fails to impress because the author chose to use the shotgun approach, where you hope that one of the cases might hit the target. You can not prove a point by simply listing a whole bunch of cases that have questionable provenance, can not be verified, or have reasonable explanations. What Mr. Wylie should have done is actually investigate/research the cases prior to compiling the list. A list of ten compelling cases that contain details that can be analyzed is much better than a listing of hundreds of poorly researched cases that have little value.

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Another Astronomer UFO story

Kevin Randle posted an interesting story about UFOs and astronomers on his blog. He presented, as evidence, an APRO bulletin article from November of 1959. On July 13, 1959, between 1010 to 1030 PM local time, three professional astronomers observed an object they described as a “flying saucer”.¹ Because the astronomer referred to it as a “flying saucer” and not a UFO, Randle states that the astronomer meant he saw an alien spaceship.

Normally, I would simply dismiss as just another story that can not be verified. However, since Mr. Randle wanted to highlight the case, I felt further checking might be necessary. Such cases that are sourced from one newspaper article are often missing many details or can make mistakes. For instance, there is no such thing as the “Alfa” constellation. Therefore, there was the possibility that the report had errors created in translation.

CASE # 6431

The only other source of information I could locate was in the Blue Book files. The case was there but the file simply included copies and translations of two news paper articles. There was a third clipping but it appeared to be unrelated to this specific sighting. One of the articles was the one quoted in the APRO newsletter. The other included more information about the sighting. The first thing I noticed was that one of the observers listed was probably not an astronomer. The man, Sirio Vas was a Captain of the Army’s technical school. Also, the constellation known as “Alfa” was actually “Alia”, which may have been a misspelling of the constellation “Ara” or “Aquila”.

Details of the event are available. Captain Sirio stated it was twice as large as Venus. However, Venus is a relatively small object even when it is closest to the earth. I suspect what the Captain was referring to was the brightness of the object. Based on the description of the object in the article, the observers were able to discern details that indicated it was much larger than a few minutes of arc across, which it would have been if it were only “twice as large as Venus”. The description in the article not used by APRO gives details about the sighting:

The object presented itself in the field of the binocular with the aspect of a disk with a conical protuberance in the central part and a set of green lights, separated, forming optically a Maltese cross with six lights in each arm, totaling 24 points of green light.... The astronomer Mario Dias Ferreira told us that the cupola of the object had a metallic aspect and the set of green lights was similar to the indication of the masts of ships. The “disk” also emitted an orange-colored jet from its extremity, giving the impression to the naked eye that it was divided into two parts.²

The paper also gave some strange comments by the astronomers:

...the professor stated the disc traversed 130 degrees in 20 minutes, but he was not able to calculate the linear velocity because at that hour their measuring instruments had been put away.³

I am not sure why they could not calculate a linear velocity when they had a rough angular velocity computed (6.5 degree/min). While the distance to the object was unknown they could have speculated on potential speeds. If the object was 1 mile distant from the observer, this computes to speed of about 600 feet/min or about 7 mph. At two miles distance, that speed would have been 14 mph. While they could not compute a precise linear speed, they could have given a range of values. They had speculated that the object was at 30 km altitude in one of the sources ⁴, which makes one wonder why they didn’t compute a linear velocity.

Along with this confusing statement is this additional comment:

...the speed with which it traversed the trajectory did not allow for the taking of pictures.⁵

How can an object visible for some twenty minutes and traveling at a reasonably slow angular speed not allow itself to be photographed? If they did not have a camera, why didn’t they just say so?

The whole problem with this sighting is the somewhat conflicting information given in the newspaper accounts. An actual written report of the sighting might have helped resolve the issue. This is probably why project Blue Book classified this as “insufficient information”.⁶

What might it have been?

Now I will choose to speculate as to the possible source of this sighting. The trajectory appears to indicate a southerly or south-westerly course. The duration of observation appears to rule out a spacecraft or debris re-entry. However, it does not eliminate

the possibility that this was a balloon of some kind despite what the astronomers reportedly stated. There are no records of research balloons in the area but there is the possibility that it might have been an illuminated weather balloon. However, I think there might be a more interesting possibility.

Looking around the net, I stumbled onto this entry about Poet Elizabeth Bishop:

*When she moved to Brazil - in Petropolis and Rio - Bishop was again witness to the launching of such "luminous fire balloons." In a letter dated 24 June, 1959, Bishop describes the St. John's festivities in Rio the previous evening, "bonfires all up and down the beach" and "everyone setting off fireworks like the fourth of July," and sending up "fire balloons" - "illegal but very pretty, all sizes and colors, little paper ones for children and huge ones for adults - ten feet or so tall". These balloons "drift through the sky for hours, turning around and around...."*⁶

The important thing here is that she acknowledges that fire balloons were being flown in the area during this time period. Therefore, we have to wonder if it was possible that such a device might have produced the sighting. The observations of twenty-four lights in a cross pattern indicate that, if it were a fire balloon, it was pretty large. Twenty-four lights indicates that twenty-four candles were probably used to heat the enclosure and might have produced the necessary lift for the required duration. The appearance of an occasional "orange jet" might have been some of the melting wax from the candles falling away. While this seems somewhat speculative, it appears possible that it might have been the source of the sighting.

Alien spaceship?

While we can never really solve this sighting, it seems possible that there was an earthly source of this report. I found the astronomers concluding that they saw a "flying disc/saucer" somewhat premature. While Randle concludes they meant to say they had seen an alien spaceship, I do not believe that was their intention. If they had been asked directly if they thought they saw an alien spaceship, they probably would have said they did not know. All they could say was they saw something they could not identify.

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The chance to record a once in a lifetime event



The recent Chelyabinsk meteor event, as well as a few other bright fireballs, had me looking on line for a dash camera for my car. For about \$50 US dollars, I was able to purchase an HD camera that comes on when I start my car and turns off shortly after the car is shutdown.

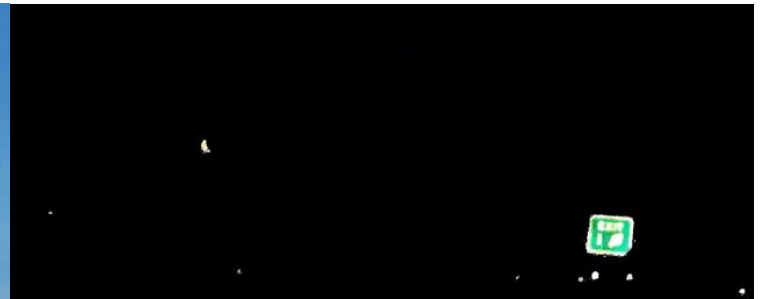
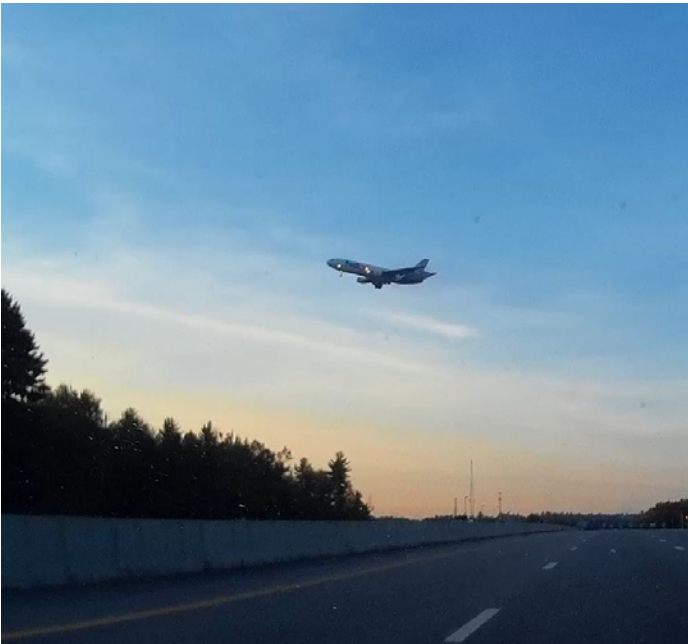
For such a small price, I wanted to see how well it recorded objects in day-light and night time conditions.

Technical specs

The camera itself can record HD video that records just about anything that is visible to the unaided eye with comparable resolution. A 32GB Micro SD card allows the recording of about 4-5 hours of HD (1920X1080) video. Once the card is full, it can be reformatted and used again after the videos are downloaded.

I found the night time sensitivity rather low. There is an infrared capability but it only works for objects up close. At night, the sensitivity of the camera is very limited and I have only been able to record the moon so far (Jupiter and Venus were not visible during my first tests). In the case of the moon images (see image below upper right), all one could resolve is the phase. Therefore, I consider its resolution limit to be about 0.5 degrees. While some might consider that inadequate, I consider it quite good for recording objects like a bright fireball, which is the primary purpose I purchased it for.

My daylight tests involved recording various aircraft while driving. In the image to the lower left, one can see a Fed ex plane landing at a Manchester airport. The details are pretty clear and I estimate the distance to be about a fifth or quarter of a mile. The airplane appears to be an MD-11, which is about 200 feet in length. If this was an actual "disc" that was about thirty feet in diameter at a distance of a few hundred feet or one of those massive triangles, hundreds of feet across, from a similar distance, it would have been clearly recorded. In another instance, I was able to record a helium balloon floating away from a local car dealership (see arrow in the image below bottom right). The distance was about a 100 yards away. The size is only a few pixels across but the behavior in the video clearly shows it is a balloon.



While I prefer that this camera be used to record a bright fireball event, there always remains the possibility that it might record a "true UFO" event. Only time will tell.

Are UFOlogists afraid of the proactive approach?

How many UFOlogists have gone the extra mile to install one of these in their own vehicles? I have remarked that UFOlogy has become boring because UFOlogists just keep doing the same old thing. As I have stated over the years with SUNlite, the technology exists today to record a UFO event that is caused by an alien spacecraft. In some cases, it is very affordable and this is a good example. If a thousand UFOlogists had one of these in each of their vehicles, wouldn't it be possible to record at least one of these UFO events in a year?

June 30, 1957

The NICAP document describes this episode briefly in section X:

June 30, 1957. An airliner en route from Belo Horizonte to Rio de Janeiro, at 6:30 p.m., encountered a glowing red-orange disc-like object. Capt. Saul Martins later told the press the UFO maneuvered all around the DC-3, pacing it, flying above and below it. One of the many passengers who also witnessed the object was a renowned Brazilian writer, Prof. Aires de Mata Machado Filho.¹

The source of this report is July 7th edition of the newspaper, Diairo Popular

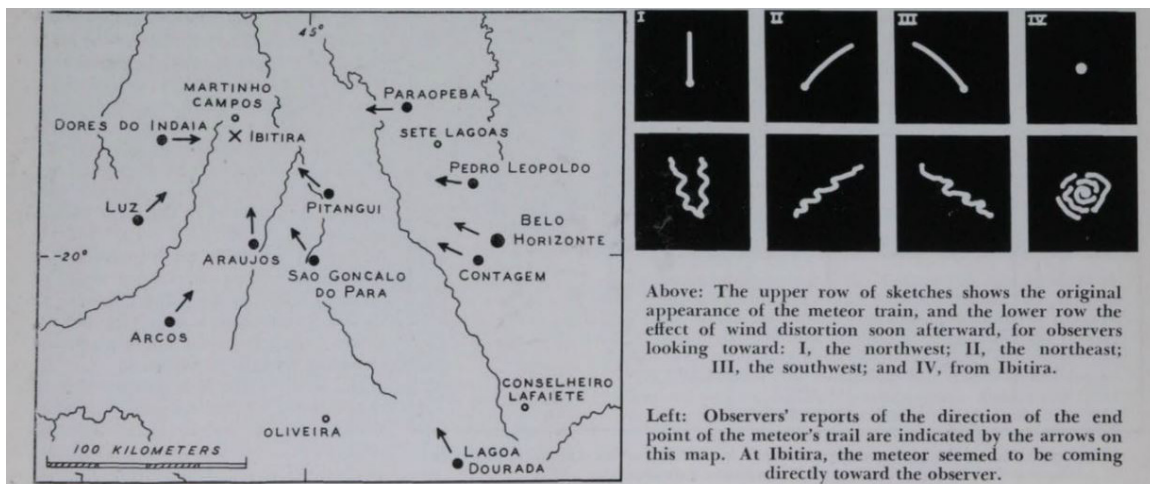
Looking for supporting information

What bothers me most of many UFO documents is how they can take one piece of information and inflate it into something bigger than it was. Sometimes critical information is left out. In this case, I could not find any additional information other than this one document. Keyhoe writes about it briefly in his book, *The flying saucer conspiracy* (page 94), but gives the date as July 7th, which is the date of the newspaper article and not the actual event. Weinstein sources Keyhoe and NICAP. He also sources Richard Haines, who appears to have sourced NICAP. Therefore, the entire case rests of the one newspaper article, where the actual source was not even directly quoted.

In an attempt to see if others might have some information, I inquired to Kentaro Mori, who has been away from UFOlogy for some time. I was hoping he might shed some light from his sources in South America. The only thing he noted was that the name of the writer was incorrect. It is actually Prof. Aires da Mata Machado Filho and he appears to have never written about this event. Beyond that I received no additional information about this sighting. It appears that the sole source for this "important" bit of evidence is this news paper article.

A coincidence?

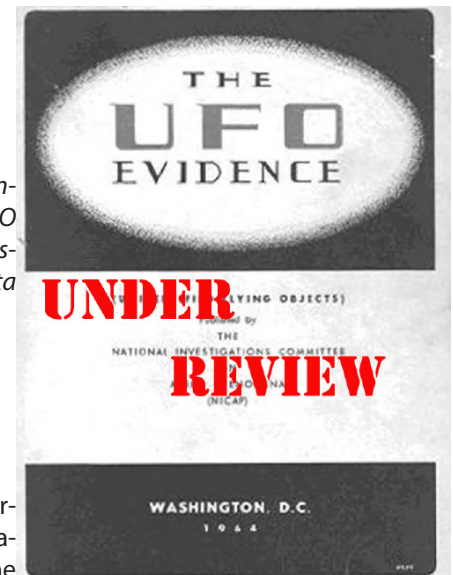
One of the reasons, I selected this case was because I stumbled across an article in *Sky and Telescope*, where the actual source of the UFO may have been documented. The November 1957 edition of *Sky and Telescope* documents a spectacular daylight fireball between 5 and 5:30 PM local time. From Belo Horizonte, the fireball was visible from an angle of 50 degrees elevation traveling "downward" towards Ibitira with an azimuth of 293 degrees (see diagram below). According to Vincent Menzes, "The fireball was seen as a reddish, egg shaped, body, which became silvery in color, but I think the latter hue was seen after disintegration."²



The fireball was visible all over the region making it as a potential candidate for this sighting. It is hard to ignore the coincidence of this spectacular event occurring within about an hour of the reported time of the sighting.

Fireballs as UFOs

The reporting of fireball meteors as UFOs is nothing new. A daylight fireball is a dramatic event and can leave quite the impression on observers. In his book, *UFOs Explained*, Phil Klass describes a daylight fireball event that startled pilots flying in Illinois, Missouri and Iowa. All thought the fireball was much closer than it was and some reported that the fireball changed course at the



last minute to avoid a collision.

Based on this information, is it that much of a stretch to suggest the time in "Diario Popular" might have been off by an hour and that the air crew may have seen the fireball? Does one newspaper clipping really count as evidence that UFOs are "*manifestations of extraterrestrial life*"?³ I classify this case as "Insufficient information" or "possible meteor". It should be removed from the lists of "Best evidence".

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 120.
2. Menezes, Vincent. "A probable meteorite fall in Brazil". Sky and Telescope. Cambridge, Mass.: Sky publishing corp. November, 1957. P. 10.
3. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 179.



The 701 club

Case 1011- November 18, 1951

In his list of Blue Book unknowns, Don Berliner describes the event:

Nov. 18, 1951; Washington, D.C. 3:20 a.m. Witnesses: Crew of Capital Airlines DC-4 Flight 610, Andrews AFB Senior air traffic controller Tom Selby. One object with several lights, followed the DC-4 for about 20 minutes and then turned back.¹

In Brad Sparks list, we read:

Nov. 18, 1951. Washington, D.C. 3:20 a.m. Crew of Capital Airlines Flight 610 and Andrews AFB senior air traffic controller Tom Selby saw an object with several lights, follow the DC-4 for about 20 mins [miles?] then turn back, with ground radar tracking [?]. (Sparks; Berliner; Saunders/FUFOR Index)²

There really isn't much more than that.

The Blue Book record

The Blue Book record card reads:

Strange object following Pilot airplane (DC-4) for about 20 miles at 8000 ft and turned back.³

When one looks at the file, there is no report from the pilot but only the report from the Air Traffic Controller Tom Selby. He describes the event as follows:

At 0320 EST Washington tower called me and asked if I had seen any strange aircraft or objects flying around Andrews. I told them no. They then advised me that a Capital pilot, flight 610 had reported a strange object following his DC-4 for 20 miles at 8000 feet. This object was reported not to be a star because of the brilliant light that it carried. Several other lights were seen on it also.

This object followed flight 610 for 20 miles and then turned and went back. Washington tower then advised that the object was east of Andrews. I saw it. It appeared to be moving slowly, if at all. My attention was turned to some thing else and when I looked at the object again, it was gone. The only thing that I saw then was a bright star. I saw this same star before, when I saw the strange object. Later I saw the object again but it soon disappeared to the south. Washington requested an aircraft be sent to check it. Redman 22, a F94 that was in the area flew to the south but didn't see anything. Washington radar advised that they were unable to pick it up on radar.⁴

This is the limit to any information we have regarding this sighting. Selby goes on to state that base operations thought he may have seen Venus but Selby stated that he saw his UFO and Venus, which he described as a bright star.

There are some points that need to be emphasized regarding all of this:

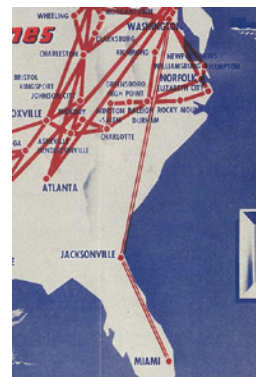
- The information about flight 610 was second hand. It may or may not be entirely accurate.
- Selby did not see anything until Washington told him to look for a UFO.
- When told to look to the east, he saw his UFO, but only for a moment (we do not have a duration) and it appeared to be somewhat stationary. When he looked again, it was gone.
- After an unknown period of time, Selby saw the UFO again and it went south.
- There was never any reported radar contact in this file and Selby stated that Washington was unable to pick it up. However, both Sparks and Weinstein claim that radar tracked the object. One can not determine how they drew this conclusion since they give no sources that can be checked.

The lack of any other information may have a lot to do with the fact that Blue Book did not receive this report until April 11, 1952.⁵ This appears to have been a bureaucratic mistake and the report was sent to the wrong location. As a result, any possibility of a follow-up that might resolve the case was lost.

Analysis

The first thing one needs to discover is where was flight 610 in all of this. Looking up the old airline tables for Capital Airlines, the July 1, 1953 table reveals that flight 610 was an air coach overnight flight from Detroit to Miami.⁶ It stopped in Washington D.C. at 1:20 AM and left at 2:00 AM. Since it was airborne, it was either flying into DC or on its way to Miami. It all depends if it was on time or not and if this was the correct schedule. If the times in 1953 are the same as 1951, it probably was on its way south. While, the brochure only gives the "To Miami" designation after leaving Washington D.C. it does not mention any further stops. However, the front of the brochure indicates the route was via Jacksonville.⁷ This indicates that the plane may have been flying SSW.

This course appears to match the description that the DC-4 had a UFO following them being east of Edwards Air Force Base. The plane could not have the UFO "follow them" unless it was towards the rear of the aircraft and they could see it. This implies a direction of observation that was towards the northeast



or east of them. What could have been observed was Venus outside their rear quarter towards the east. As they proceeded south, it kept its same position giving the impression of them being followed. What caused the UFO to “turn back” may have been due to a course change or the Venus disappearing behind distant clouds. Venus had risen at 3AM and, at 3:20 AM, was at an elevation of about 3 degrees. Saturn was also in the east about a degree above the horizon.

Selby's observations were of a “object” that was in the same general direction as Venus. Comparing his observations of an object that was only seen briefly, and then lost to the observation, to a very bright light described by the pilots indicates that his UFO was probably not the same object. If the pilots saw a bright object and they were to the southwest of Andrews AFB, Selby's UFO should have been bright and easily visible. His observations indicate something that was fainter than “the bright star” he recalled seeing in the same direction. His UFO could have been the planet Saturn, which was a few degrees below Venus and around magnitude +1. At the angle of elevation 1-2 degrees. Its low angle of elevation could make it something that was glimpsed briefly and then lost due to ground haze, clouds, or fog.



Selby's second observation was of an object that appeared and then went south. We have no duration for this event but it is implied that it was only a brief period of time. He concludes that he saw the same object as his first observation but there is no evidence to draw that conclusion. It is possible that his UFO that disappeared to the south might have been a Leonid meteor, which had peaked on the morning of the 17th. Occasional bright meteors from the radiant (situated about 45 degrees elevation in the east) could have gone in a southerly direction giving the impression that he had seen a UFO. It is also possible that Selby might have seen some sort of aircraft in the area. We don't know because Blue Book did not receive this information until it was too late to conduct a proper investigation of the incident and Selby was not very thorough in his report.

Is it solved?

I don't consider this one solved. However, there is reason to suspect that Venus may have been involved with the initial sighting by the aircraft. Selby's sighting does not give us much and it is possible that what he saw were simply astronomical objects/events. Based on the limited amount of information, the best we can label this is “possible astronomical (Venus/Saturn/ meteor)” or “insufficient information”. I would not leave it in the “unidentified” category simply because there is very little in this case file that can be properly evaluated.

Notes and references

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2. Sparks, Brad. Comprehensive Catalog of 1,600 Project Blue Book UFO Unknowns. Available WWW: http://www.cufos.org/BB_Unknowns.pdf
3. “Project 10073 record card”. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <http://www.fold3.com/image/7011955/>
4. Selby, Tom. “Strange object reported by a Capital Air Lines pilot to DCA tower.” Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <http://www.fold3.com/image/7011963/>
5. Adams, William. “Disposition form”. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <http://www.fold3.com/image/7011970/>
6. 1953 Capital Airlines timetable. Page 6. Available WWW: <http://www.timetableimages.com/timages/complete/ca53/ca53-6.jpg>
7. 1953 Capital Airlines timetable. Page 2. Available WWW: <http://www.timetableimages.com/timages/complete/ca53/ca53-2.jpg>

UFOs on the tube

Aliens on the moon: The truth exposed

This title is what one would expect from the SYFY channel. Anytime I see the word “truth” in a program or book’s title, I immediately start to become skeptical because what I expect to read/see is the author’s/producer’s version of the truth. That usually involves evidence that is somewhat dubious and selected to prove that the “truth” has been “exposed”. I found it humorous that, in between segments, we were treated to clips of the new movie “Sharknado 2”. That left me wondering which show was science fiction and which was supposed to be a documentary.

Rather than debunk all the nonsense that appeared on the program (which is done quite well on this blog), I feel it is necessary to be critical of the participants. In my opinion, the show was split into three distinct groups.

The qualified group involves Astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Edgar Mitchell, Space historian Amy Shira Teitel, and geologist Danielle Wyrick. These individuals came across as credible but appeared to be cut off in mid-sentence as they were about to make valid points. A good example was Wyrick discussing a supposed “bridge/pipe” feature on the moon. She suggested it could simply be ejecta that piled up in an unusual formation but was then cutoff. The narrator would then proclaim that whatever it was it appeared to be some sort of engineering “marvel” constructed long ago. Had the producer allowed these four individuals to actually address the claims properly, they would have made the rest of the cast appear stupid.

The “they should know better” group included such UFO personalities as Marc D’Antonio, Lee Spiegel, and Nick Redfern. Redfern wildly speculated about how the aliens could launch an attack from the moon and gave the impression that he was confirming what was being presented. Spiegel also gave weak endorsements of the claims made. Marc D’Antonio, whom I had some respect for, made himself appear to endorse many of these images because he could not explain them. I guess he has never heard of pareidolia, where people see what they want to see. While D’Antonio is a good photo analyst, he is no expert on planetary geology, which makes his opinion on the images essentially worthless. Perhaps this was D’Antonio’s audition for next season’s “Hanger one” program. If so, he should ditch the red t-shirt as it appeared to come right out of Star Trek (sans the insignia). Unless you are Scotty, most “red shirts” get knocked off at some point in the episode.

The third group could be classified as the “kooks” since this is how they appeared. Ken Johnston wore a leather jacket with all sorts of patches that he probably bought at NASA’s gift shop. From what I understand, he was nothing more than a simple shipping clerk at NASA and never was a pilot. Apparently, it did not matter to the producers that their prize witnesses were inflating their credentials. Don Ecker, who claimed to have been part of the production, seemed to have problems recognizing boulders making tracks as they rolled along the ground. Joshua Warren promoted the Apollo 20 hoax as if it were something to believe was real. Despite being supposedly launched from Vandenberg AFB in 1976, there is absolutely no observations of a Saturn V (the only rocket that could accomplish this mission) blasting off into space after 1973. The alien body inside the lunar module appeared to look like something out of alien autopsy. Didn’t Kiviat also produce that? Meanwhile, Michael Bara (who reportedly is going to appear in next season’s “Hanger one”) endorsed just about every claim made on the program. He has teamed up with Richard Hoagland to peddle this kind of stuff, which blows his credibility right away. Another “expert” was Allan Sturm. He claims that he originally wanted to take pictures of the moon through his telescope and compare them with photographs from spacecraft in some sort of “coffee table” book. Since very few would buy this kind of book, it seems that he decided to promote some wild conspiracy book about aliens on the moon. It is clear that this kind of product does sell and Sturm profited from his wise business choice. In order to sell the idea that NASA is hiding evidence, the producers introduced Donna Hare, who made the claim that NASA airbrushed out UFOs. Despite having no security clearance, she simply waltzed into the area where this occurred and watched it all happen. Of course, she gave not a single name that could be checked. It is easy to make up this kind of story when you don’t give any details that will expose you as dishonest. I did not find any of these individuals credible but I am sure there are plenty of people, who blindly accepted their claims.

The one thing I noticed was that the program was quite happy to use decades old images of the moon and not attempt to look any further. Many of these regions were photographed by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) with greater resolution. A simple check of the database reveals that the “satellite dish” was nothing more than a crater. This means that Kiviat and these individuals were engaged in misleading people for their own benefit. This is no surprise.

Robert Kiviat gave us the Alien Autopsy hoax and delivered this garbage as well. Kiviat could care less if it was true or not. He is just interested in making a buck. If you did not watch it, don’t bother when it comes around again. If you did watch it, you have my sympathy for wasting two hours of your life on this nonsense. I would rather have watched “Sharknado 2”.

Editor’s note: There will be no book review this issue because I just did not have the time to read any books on the subject. So, instead of reviewing some old book that I had not previously reviewed, I chose to pass on this issue.